

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7910

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15684

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: MARONITE MONKS

1. HAD LUNCHEON YESTERDAY WITH FATHER KASSIS PLUS A MONK WHO WAS INTRODUCED TO ME AS HEAD OF HIS HISTORICAL RESEARCH BRANCH, A CIVILIAN WHO IS HIS LEGAL ADVISOR AND A MONK WHO WAS HIS PREDECESSOR AND SENIOR COUNSELLOR. BEFORE LUNCH KASSIS AND I SPOKE PRIVATELY FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES. HE WAS CORDIAL, GRACIOUS AND RATHER ADROITLY HAD ME DO MOST OF THE TALKING RE OUR VIEW NOT ONLY OF CURRENT SITUATION BUT WHAT LED UP TO IT. I REVIEWED SITUATION ALONG LINES ALREADY FAMILIAR TO THE DEPARTMENT EMPHASIZING, HOWEVER, NECESSITY FOR COMPROMISE, RECONCILIATION AND AVOIDING FURTHER BLOODSHED. ONLY POINT THAT KASSIS MADE WITH ME PRIVATELY WAS DISCUSSION OF GUARANTEES AND WHETHER USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO GUARANTEE, INCLUDING MILITARY INTERVENTION, AN INTERNAL, POLITICAL AGREEMENT THAT MIGHT BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS. TOLD KASSIS I COULD NOT REPEAT NOT RESPOND OFFICIALLY, WOULD INQUIRE IF HE WISHED, BUT THAT MY PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT SUCH A GUARANTEE TODAY WAS UNTHINKABLE. AGAIN OFFERED TO QUERY WASHINGTON BUT HE SAID IT WAS NOT NECESSARY AND HE SHARED THIS POINT OF VIEW. I WAS INTERESTED HOWEVER, IN THAT HE ONLY RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A U.S. GUARANTEE AT THE END OF OUR PRIVATE TALK AND PRIOR THERETO SPOKE OF A UN AND EC-9 OR A FRENCH OR BELIGAN GUARANTEE.

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2. AT LUNCHEON, CONVERSATION WAS MUCH MORE FREE-WHEELING. THE FOLLOWING CAME OUT LOUD AND CLEAR. MONKS ARE CONVINCED ONLY BE CONTINUING PRESENT SITUATION CAN LEBANON BENEFIT FROM THE TRULY "DEMOCRATIC" REGIME IT HAS KNOWN SO FAR. ANY MODIFICATION WOULD BE SURRENDERING LEBANON TO LEFTIST MOSLEMS WHO WOULD REDUCE THE CHRISTIANS HERE TO SECOND OR THIRD CLASS CITIZENS. MARONITE "DEMOCRACY" CONSISTS OF CONTINUED SIX TO FIVE REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT, A MARONITE PRESIDENT AND A MARONITE COMMANDING THE ARMY. WHEN I POINTED OUT POSSIBLE SIMILARITIES WITH WHITE RULE IN AFRICA, KASSIS AND HIS ASSOCIATES HIT ME HARD ON THE OVERSEAS MARONITES, IMPLYING THAT THE MARONITES WERE GENEROUS IN ACCORDING SIX TO FIVE, FOR IN REALITY IT SHOULD BE SEVEN TO FOUR POINT EIGHT.

3. CHRISTIAN FUTURE MUST BE GUARANTEED. AT LUNCHEON THERE WAS NO MENTION INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES BUT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE MARONITES PRESENT WERE THINKING OF SIX TO FIVE, PRESIDENCY AND ARMY LEADERSHIP AS THE ONLY VALID QUARANTEES.

4. LEBANESE CHRISTIANS ARE THE DEFENDERS OF "AMERICAN DEMOCRACY" IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD AND THEREFORE WE MUST SUPPORT EHM. SAIQA IS 40 PERCENT COMMUNIST AND ALL SYRIANS AND MOST OF THE PLO ARE SIMILARLY TAINTED.

5. PRIOR TO THE MEETING I HAD BEEN RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC THAT SOME SORT OF ACCOMMODATION MIGHT BE REACHED (EMBTel 15623). I MUST SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THIS HOPE WAS DESTROYED BY THE MONKS AND ESPECIALLY THE FACT THAT FRANGIE APPEARS TO HAVE REVIVED THE THESIS OF OVERSEAS LEBANESE BEING CONSIDERED IN THE CONSUS. THE ONLY OPTIMISTIC ELEMENTS WERE THAT ALL THE LEBANESE PRESENT WERE VILENTLY OPPOSED TO PARTITION AND THEY SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE "EXCHANGING VIEWS". I HAVE INVITED THEM FOR LUNCHEON AT SOME STILL UNSPECIFIED DAY EARLY NEXT YEAR.

6. THESE MEN ARE INDEED ANTEDILUVIAL. I CERTAINLY DON'T THINK I WILL EVER BE ABLE TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, IT IS WISE TO MAINTAIN THIS CONTACT SO CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY DON'T HAVE ANY MISAPPREHENSION AS TO OUR VIEWS, EITHER ON THE LEBANON OR ON THE AREA. IF DEPT HAS ANY THOUGHTS OR ADDITIONAL POINTS THAT MIGHT BE MADE TO THEM, I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR THEM.

7. SINCE DICTATING FOREGOING HAVE JUST SEEN DEPTel 304468, SUBJECT POLITICAL MANEUVERS. FOREGOING DOES NOT REPEAT NOT CONSITTUTE A RESPONSE BUT CERTAINLY

BEARS ON THE ATTITUDE OF AN IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL  
SEGMENT OF THE MARONITES.  
GODLEY

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